The new buildings will help alleviate business classes held throughout the campus.

**FIU’s business school unveils expansion plan**

**BY KEVIN GALE**

Florida International University's College of Business Administration plans to break ground this summer on two new buildings, Executive Dean Joyce J. Elam announced at a March 10 event to recognize donors who have kicked in a total of $9 million.

The college is still seeking $6 million in private donations for what will ultimately be a $45 million, four-building complex next to the Ryder Business Building. The state has already granted $15 million and will match the $15 million in private money. Elam admits she had an ambitious vision.

"Joyce, you should scale back your vision," is the advice someone gave her. Elam said at the event. "Nobody had raised that type of money for a building like that on this campus."

However, the $9 million means construction can start on the first two buildings, which Elam expects to occupy in the spring of 2007.

The buildings will help alleviate business classes sprinkled all over FIU's Miami campus. Some are held in portable classrooms. At the event, about 500 attendees saw a computer-generated presentation of the four new buildings, whose modernistic interlocking forms were designed by John Pederson Fox Associates of New York and BEA International of Miami.

The new buildings will house the Alzahi H. Chapman Jr Graduate School of Business and some of the programs for the R. Kirk Landon Undergraduate School of Business. One of the first two buildings is the academic hall, which will have a 300-seat auditorium, 60-person tiered classrooms, collaborative learning classrooms, computer and research laboratories. The student hall building will house admissions and career services offices, a multi-purpose center for gatherings, a home for student clubs and administrative offices.

The second phase will include the common hall with an executive boardroom, study rooms and a coffee shop. The faculty and research center hall will have faculty offices, instructional and technology spaces and offices for the college's research centers.

In a sense, the business school is trying to catch its infrastructure up to its size and reputation. FIU has 8,000 undergraduate business students and 800 graduate students -- ranking among the top 10 in graduates accredited by the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business. U.S. News & World Report ranked the graduate school's international program the ninth best in the nation and the publication Best Graduate Schools ranked the graduate school in the top 25.

"I think this is a watershed event for the College of Business," said Angel Medina, Miami-Dade market president for Regions Bank and chairman of the business school's dean's council, who said he remembers when there were only three buildings on campus when he was studying finance. Now, he said, "all world-class schools have world-class buildings and this is not going to be an exception."

**Major donors**

- R. Kirk Landon, retired CEO and chairman of American Bankers Insurance, donated $5 million and the undergraduate business school is named after him.
- The graduate school of business is named after Alzah H. Chapman Jr, retired CEO and chairman of Knight Ridder.
- Ocean Bank donated $1 million and will have its name on an auditorium in the new academic hall.
- Bank of America will have its name on the career services center.
- Wachovia Foundation will have its name on a collaboration classroom.
- Morrison, Brown, Argiz & Farra will have its name on a collaboration classroom.
- Major contributions: Armando Codina, Guarded Networks, Regions Bank, the Graham family, and Augusto and Jeanie Vidaurreta.

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